When I was sending out the call for papers for the present issue of Links & Letters, I received a reply from a Professor of English —an Englishman— who asked me: «I know what English is, but what on earth do you mean by englishes?» The pluralized form will be familiar to those working in varieties of English, to dialectologists and sociolinguists, but may still shock many who are only peripherally aware that there may be something going on in language, literature and culture outside of the 'metropolitan' canons of standard British or American English.

In fact the spread of (varieties of) English world-wide over the last four hundred years is unprecedented in the history of the world. It has been taken by significant numbers of English-speaking migrants to North America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, especially; or has been imposed as a colonial language by the British throughout their empire in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Pacific territories, and by the USA in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Philippines etc. Its implantation in many of these colonized lands has survived decolonization, and English has become a 'second' —or third, fourth, fifth— language for hundreds of millions, or even, for certain functions, the 'first' language for many. Its persistence within different cultures and usually multilingual societies has led inevitably to continual processes of adaptation, variation and change (this is of course also true of the multidialectal English-speaking societies of Britain and America). In the second half of this century the expansion of English as a 'foreign' language has been exponential: it is increasingly used internationally in business, diplomacy, scientific publications and conferences, the communications industry, the entertainment industry, and so forth, to the point where national exposure to English (and different varieties of it) in societies where it is considered a foreign language (ie. without internal social functions) increases person by person, 'functional event' by 'functional event'.

How can we study such phenomena at a macro- and micro-level? The perspectives on individual varieties and comparatively across varieties are many and intertwined (linguistic, sociological, cultural, political, ideological), and the theoretical and methodological approaches and paradigms which can be used within each of these perspectives are also many. Perhaps a useful umbrella term for the different perspectives in interaction is the 'pragmatic perspective' upon language as defined by Jef Verschueren (see *Links & Letters 3*,

Interview, 1996): «it deals primarily with language use that involves certain cognitive processes that take place in a social world with a variety of cultural constraints» (p. 128). The question is: how and why does someone say or write what they do, in that particular way, to the person(s) they do, for that particular purpose, in a particular language or variety, at that particular moment? Connecting empirically the micro-level of individual acts of communication to the macro-level of a 'variety' or 'set of varieties' ideally involves observing, generalizing and abstracting emergent patterns of form and use from amongst the billions of daily acts of communication in englishes around the world. Essential research of all kinds awaits present and future generations of scholars.

The nine major articles in this issue are appropriately varied. Manfed Görlach provides a state-of-the-art overview of varieties, criteria for determining their 'englishness', and the present state of research. There are three other survey articles: Braj Kachru reviews the Asian scene of English, and reflects on a number of important issues; Jenny Cheshire and Viv Edwards summarize and comment on the findings of their Survey of British Dialect Grammar; Melvin Hoffman reviews thirty-three years of history behind the recent Ebonics controversy in the USA. Four research articles report their findings: Sali Tagliamonte and Jenny Smith compare patterns of grammatical variation in four small Black and White communities in Canada and Scotland. Geoff Smith shows from an analysis of his fieldwork the recent amount and type of lexical influence of English on Tok Pisin in a part of Papua New Guinea. David Sutcliffe presents new evidence from recordings of ex-slaves in the USA for the co-existence of an English creole with African American Black English amongst Blacks in some parts of the southern USA in the nineteenth century. Wolfgang Viereck takes a new look at blood group populations in Britain and their correlation with traditional dialect areas. The ninth article, happily, keeps up the tradition in each issue of an applied, classroom-related topic: Anna Asian and Jim McCullough look at the history and features of Hiberno-English and the teaching of Irish literature within the EFL classroom.

There is a new section of short articles and reports in this volume, with five contributions. There are two reports on major dictionary projects by their directors: the Usage Dictionary of Anglicisms in Selected European Countries (Manfred Görlach), and a note on the Macquarie South-east Asian Corpus/ Dictionary project (Susan Butler). Maite Turell reports on her sociolinguistic survey of expatriate American and British English speakers in Spain, and some of the linguistic effects of living in a non-English-speaking country. Aileen Wiglesworth reports on her research into the contact between English and Maori in the small South-west Pacific region of the Cook Islands. Alex Monaghan takes a timely, thought-provoking look into the future with 'Web English' (English over the Internet).

Following on from Links & Letters 4 *(Literature and Neocolonialism)*, the interview takes a 'round-table' format with five well-known scholars: Braj Ka-

chru, Salikoko Mufwene, Rajendra Singh, Loreto Todd, and Peter Trudgill.

'Margins' is a small section special to this issue containing five texts, only one of which is in standard English. Of the five, four are published here for the first time: two are original writings, three are transcripts from culturally fascinating field recordings of 'marginal' groups using 'marginal' englishes.

As usual there is a selected bibliography for the topic of the issue as a guide for those readers who wish to explore the field further.

It has been a pleasure to coordinate this volume of Links & Letters. A pleasure because it is a profuse, variegated and enjoyable topic; a pleasure, too, because of the strong response and the many contributions, only some of which, unfortunately, could be published. It is a pleasure to be able to present our readers, on the journal's fifth anniversary, with a much larger volume than normal, where the variety and quality of the contents will make for much interesting reading. As always within the philosophy of the journal: to link together specialists and non-specialists around current ideas and topics in English Studies by making them as readable as possible.

In the near future we would like to develop an ongoing dialogue between issue editors, readers and contributors around this and other issues. To this purpose a web-site for the journal will be developed over the coming year, with a mail box for comments and further contributions, which can then be circulated electronically to those who wish to belong to a Links & Letters List.

And a final note. The lower-case *e* of *englishes* which can be found in variation with *E* in parts of this volume is *not* a typographical error. A 'distributional analysis' will show that *e* appears with the voice of the editor, while elsewhere the capital *E* used by the contributors has been respected. It contains a small message. The possible aspects of that message could form the seed for an ongoing dialogue between all of us who are 'Linked' together through our common interest in this issue of Links & Letters.

David Prendergast
Issue editor